

February 8, 1983

LB 401

SENATOR PIRSCH: Okay, thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Labedz.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you. Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I rise in support of LB 401. I do think that the people that I have talked to, especially those on unemployment that have exhausted all unemployment compensation, when they call me and desperately ask for help, I suggest that the only thing they can turn to is welfare and food stamps. The thought of going to welfare truly upsets them. It is a stigma that they don't appreciate going to the Department of Welfare. I think social services is exactly the way it sounds. I even sometimes think that we should make it "human resources" or "human services", because what we are doing, we are dealing with human beings that need help. And, true, as Senator Peterson says, there is abuse in the programs. I will not stand here and deny that. But in any program that the government has, we are going to find abuses, and I think changing the name to social services or even to human services, because as I said we are dealing with human beings that are desperately in need of help, children that are possibly going hungry, the elderly especially that cannot pay their utility bills because of the fixed income, and even have a little doubt about going to welfare to obtain the energy subsidizing that they receive when they cannot pay their utility bills, and the thought of turning to welfare because people have looked down on people on welfare so long, because like I said and Senator Peterson said, there are some abuses but so very, very little compared to the thousands of families that we are helping and the thousands of elderly that cannot any more live on two...three hundred dollars a month than you and I could. There is no way that any one of us on the floor of the Legislature could live on our \$400 a month if we had a family and a home to maintain. Changing it to human services or social services is something that should have been done a long time ago. I certainly support Senator Higgins in her attempt to change the name so that people will feel more comfortable in going to the Department of Social Services. After all, many of the programs that we are getting out of Washington are now called Human Rights or Human Services or Social Services and they are not called welfare programs. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Mr. President and members of the body, I don't want to belabor the point but I do think that Senator Peterson does have a point and I am not going to get technical